

Message Text

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FOR THE SECRETARY AND ADMINISTRATOR GILLIGAN FROM AMBASSADOR

DEPARTMENT PASS TO AID

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SPOP, EC
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S ROLE IN DEALING WITH PRESSING GLOBAL
PROBLEMS - POPULATION GROWTH AND ADEQUATE FOOD PRODUCTION

REFS: (A) STATE 107370, (B) STATE 128220, (C) STATE 200402,
(D) STATE 297241

1. CHIEFS OF MISSION AND RANKING OFFICERS HAVE SEPARATELY
DISCUSSED POPULATION AND ADEQUATE FOOD PRODUCTION PROBLEMS
WITH TOP OFFICIALS OF GOE OVER THE YEARS. THESE SUBJECTS
HAVE OFTEN FORMED PART OF DISCUSSIONS HELD WITH MINISTRIES OF
FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AGRICULTURE, INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE, FINANCE,
LABOR, AND HEALTH, AND WITH THE NATIONAL PLANNING BOARD.
POPULATION HAS RECEIVED MORE ATTENTION THAN FOOD PRODUCTION
SINCE WE HAVE MAINTAINED AN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IN THIS AREA.
BECAUSE OF PHASE DOWN FOR SEVERAL YEARS OF AID'S ECONOMIC
ASSISTANCE AND OUR DESIRE NOT TO PROVOKE REQUESTS FOR SUCH
PROGRAMS, OUR DISCUSSION OF FOOD PRODUCTION HAS BEEN MORE
RESTRAINED; BUT WE HAVE POINTED OUT THE GRAVE PROBLEMS OF
DECLINING FOOD PRODUCTION, ESPECIALLY IN THE SIERRA. THESE
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TOPICS HAVE ALSO BEEN DISCUSSED WITH CIVILIAN PRESIDENTIAL
CANDIDATES, ONE OF WHOM IS SCHEDULED TO BECOME CHIEF OF
STATE NEXT YEAR AND WITH WHOSE ADMINISTRATION WE HOPE TO
RENEW AN AID PROGRAM. THE MISSION IS CURRENTLY WORKING
TO PREPARE A NEW AID PROGRAM AND BOTH THESE AREAS ARE
GIVEN THE HIGHEST PRIORITY.

2. ECUADOR CLEARLY NEEDS STRONGER POLICIES AND MORE EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS, AS WELL AS EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE, IN BOTH FOOD PRODUCTION AND POPULATION CONTROL. IN ALMOST EVERY MAJOR CATEGORY OF STAPLE FOODS, OUTPUT HAS BEEN DECLINING PRECIPITOUSLY DURING RECENT YEARS, WHILE POPULATION GROWTH, AT 3.4 PERCENT PER ANNUM, REMAINS AMONG THE WORLD'S HIGHEST. IF, AS WE INTEND, THE AID PROGRAM IS REACTIVATED WITH THE RESTORATION OF CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT, OUR AID MISSION WILL BE PREPARED TO PROPOSE ASSISTANCE TO AUGMENT FOOD PRODUCTION. PROJECTS FOR THIS PURPOSE WILL DERIVE FROM THE TITLE XII BASELINE STUDY ON AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND EXTENSION WHICH WILL BE INITIATED NEXT MONTH.

3. AS CONCERNS POPULATION, GOE POLICY IS TO PROVIDE FAMILY PLANNING INFORMATION AND SERVICES TO QUOTE ALL WHO FREELY SEEK THEM UNQUOTE. POLICY ALSO REQUIRES THAT FP SERVICES BE COMPLETELY INTEGRATED WITH PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEM. IN PRINCIPLE THIS INTEGRATED APPROACH HAS ADVANTAGES, AND IS ALSO CONSISTENT WITH USG POLICY. HOWEVER, PUBLIC HEALTH NETWORK REACHES ONLY SMALL PROPORTION OF POPULATION, ESPECIALLY IN RURAL AREAS, AND THUS IS NOT YET AN EFFECTIVE VEHICLE FOR DELIVERING EITHER HEALTH OR FP SERVICES. CONSEQUENTLY, ONLY SOME 12 PERCENT OF MARRIED WOMEN OF REPRODUCTIVE AGE REGULARLY USE FP METHODS SUPPLIED UNDER ORGANIZED OR OFFICIAL PROGRAMS AND MOST OF THESE ARE URBAN RESIDENTS. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WHAT IS NEEDED IS SOME FORM OF COMMUNITY-BASED DISTRIBUTION OF CONTRACEPTIVES WHICH IS NOT TOTALLY DEPENDENT ON THE HIGHLY INADEQUATE HEALTH SYSTEM. THE AID MISSION HAS BEEN GINGERLY PURSUING THIS OPTION WITH THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH OVER PAST SEVERAL MONTHS, WITH MILDLY ENCOURAGING RESULTS. WHETHER NEW GOVERNMENT WILL MODIFY POLICY TO PERMIT COMMUNITY-BASED DISTRIBUTION REMAINS TO BE SEEN, BUT EMBASSY WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT USAID'S EFFORTS AT FRIENDLY PERSUASION IN THIS AREA AND ITS PROPOSAL FOR A RENEWED BILATERAL GRANT PROGRAM IF GOE TAKES EFFECTIVE ACTION TO SIGNIFICANTLY BROADEN ACCESS TO FP SERVICES.

4. AMBASSADOR AND MISSION OFFICIALS WILL CONTINUE TO DIALOGUE ON THESE SUBJECTS AND URGE SELF-HELP PROJECTS AS WELL AS POSSIBLE COOPERATION TO SUPPLEMENT AND INDUCE GREATER LOCAL EFFORTS.
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